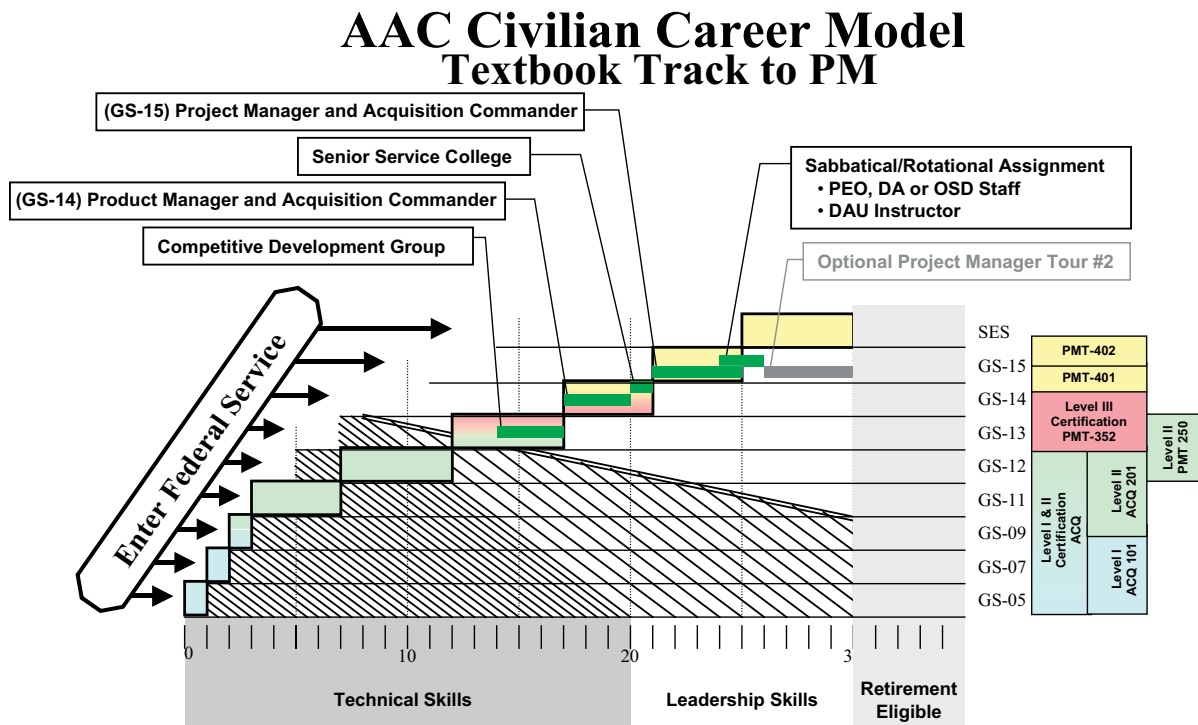


I. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A. Civilian Product/Project Manager and Acquisition Commander Model.



- Shaded bars denote notional atypical career path (colors match acquisition training requirements)
- Individual careers will vary based on personal circumstances and decisions
- Individuals may plateau and remain in same grade for any period of time at any point in the career
- Green and gray bars indicate typical career points for various centrally selected assignments
- There is no prerequisite relationship between the centrally selected assignments illustrated

B. Steps to Planning Your Civilian Acquisition Career With the Goal of Becoming a PM/AC.

The following steps will be of assistance to you as you enter the Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (AL&T) Workforce and plan your career with the goal of becoming a PM or AC. These steps should be viewed as advisory in nature and not hard-and-fast rules. While many of the steps overlap, they are generally sequential. (NOTE: The Acquisition Career Management Handbook, policies and procedures are on the Acquisition Support Center (ASC) home page, <http://asc.army.mil>, and provide detailed information on the programs, processes and requirements addressed in this handbook.)

1. **Be aware of how your Acquisition Career Field fits into the workforce.**

The Army AL&T Workforce is made up of individuals who perform work throughout the life cycle of a weapon/information system; i.e., cradle to grave. The following eleven functional career fields constitute the AL&T Workforce: Program Management; Contracting; Industrial/Contract Property Management; Purchasing and Procurement Technician; Production, Quality and Manufacturing; Business, Cost Estimating and Financial Management; Life Cycle Logistics; Information Technology; Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering-Science and Technology Manager; Test and Evaluation; and Facilities Engineering. The career field assigned to your position can be found in Section I of your Acquisition Career Record Brief (ACRB), under the "Category" block. See paragraph 3 for information on ACRBs.

2. **Contact your Acquisition Career Manager (ACM).**

Upon placement in an acquisition position, your first step should be to contact your ACM who will advise and assist you in planning your career development and in completing the various documents addressed in this handbook. Your status and location determine which ACM you should contact. Contact information for ACMs is on the ASC home page, <http://asc.army.mil>. Note: The Human Resources Command's (HRC's) Acquisition Management Branch (AMB) civilian ACMs support Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) and Competitive Development Group (CDG) members. Regional ACMs support GS-13s (who are not in the AAC) and below. While these individuals are available to assist you, **you are responsible for managing your own career.**

3. **Prepare your ACRB.**

The first thing your ACM will have you do is establish an ACRB in the Civilian Acquisition Position Personnel Management Information System (CAPP MIS) database. The ACRB is an automated, authenticated record of your education, training, and acquisition assignment history. ***It is your official acquisition record and it is your responsibility to initiate changes and keep it updated. The ACRB is an important document for civilians competing on selection boards. It is the civilian equivalent of the Officer Record Brief (ORB).*** Check it on a regular basis to ensure the data is current and accurate. You may view and print your ACRB by going to <https://rda.rdaisa.army.mil/cappmis/>. Only your ACM can make changes to your ACRB.

4. **Refer to the Civilian PM/AC Model.**

Use the model and these steps to assist you in planning a career that will prepare you for a PM/AC position. You may also wish to obtain advice from your supervisor, a mentor or an Acquisition Career Management Advocate (ACMA). (ACMAs are senior civilian AAC members located within organizations with a high concentration of AL&T Workforce employees.)

5. **Document your career goals on your Individual Development Plan (IDP).**

The IDP is a required document for all members of the AL&T Workforce. It is a 5-year plan that

outlines your education, training and experience goals. Define your career goals and objectives in concrete terms; i.e., determine where you are in your career and where you want to be both in the short term and the long term. Work with your supervisor and agree on a plan that is consistent with your goals. Document the desired education, training or experience on your IDP and have your supervisor approve the plan. *Keep your goal for a PM/AC position in mind as you develop your IDP. In addition to a graduate and undergraduate degree, ensure your IDP provides for attainment of the statutory and regulatory acquisition education and training requirements and a wide range of experience, to include supervisory and leadership positions.*

6. Solicit a senior acquisition leader as a mentor to help you develop and refine your short and long-term goals.

A mentor will be a valuable asset in guiding and assisting you with career decisions and plans.

7. Become certified in your Acquisition Career Field (ACF).

Your first priority as a member of the AL&T Workforce is to become certified in the position you occupy. (If you are just starting your career, your current position is assumed to be in your ACF.) The certification level required for your position is listed on your ACRB under Section I, the "AAC Certification Level Required" block. The mark of proficiency in your acquisition career field is attainment of Level III certification and this should be your goal regardless of the level required by your current position. The requirements by ACF may be found in the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Catalog, <http://www.dau.mil>. If you do not understand the requirements, you may contact your ACM for clarification. There are a number of ways to obtain the training necessary to meet the certification training standards:

- Attend DAU resident/on-site courses.
- Take DAU Distance Learning (Web-based) courses.
- Obtain credit for equivalency courses.
- Obtain credit through the DOD Fulfillment Program.

8. Commence career-broadening activities; do not stovepipe your career.

Once you have become certified Level III in your ACF, you should commence career-broadening activities. Becoming multidisciplined is an important step in your acquisition career and will be a valuable attribute as you compete for PM/AC positions. Keep in mind that all education, training, and experience opportunities must be documented on your IDP and approved by your supervisor.

- Priority should be given to meeting the requirements for AAC membership.
- If you are Level III certified in the PM ACF and at least a lieutenant colonel/GS-14, apply for the Program Manager's Course (PMT 401) at the DAU. The course is designed for workforce members who have demonstrated the potential to become acquisition managers and deputies of major acquisition programs.

- Apply for learning opportunities offered in the Acquisition, Education, Training and Experience (AETE) Catalog (<http://asc.army.mil/pubs/aete/default.cfm>). These opportunities range from leadership development courses to degree completion and master's degree programs.
- Contact your ACM about leadership and DAU courses coming to your area through the Regional Acquisition, Education, Training, and Experience Program.
- Become certified at least Level II or III in one or more other ACFs. (ACFs Business, Cost Estimating and Financial Management and Contracting would be helpful in preparing for a PM/AC position. Certification will require experience in the new career field.)
- Seek out developmental/on-the-job training opportunities that will provide broadening/cross-training experience. Look into the availability of rotational/developmental assignments in other organizations, such as those offered by the Regional Developmental Assignment Program (RDAP).
- If you do not have an advanced degree, apply for one of the many competitive opportunities found in the AETE Catalog and funded by the ASC.

9. Seek an assignment in a PMO.

This is a must for anyone aspiring to be a PM. Level III certification for PM requires 4 years acquisition experience: at least 2 years of this experience must be in a program office or similar organization and 1 year must be in a program management position with cost, schedule, and performance responsibilities. Additionally, ACAT 1 and II PM positions require 8 and 6 years acquisition experience respectively and Level III PM certification within 18 months. For ACAT I PMs, 4 of the 8 years must have been in a PM or similar organization.

10. Seek assignments/positions that will allow you to acquire and demonstrate leadership skills as early in your career as possible.

Seek out positions that will provide experience in other acquisition career fields and will allow you to acquire and demonstrate leadership skills as early in your career as possible. While these positions do not need to be supervisory, they should at least include experience as a Team Leader, IPT Leads, Process Managers, and ad hoc leaders of any kind. *This experience will develop leadership skills that can be documented on the résumé when applying for boards. Files that demonstrate strong leadership qualities and a wide range of experience generally tend to be more competitive than those that are stovepiped.*

11. Obtain an individual assessment of your strengths and weaknesses in terms of leadership competencies.

An assessment will assist you in planning your leadership development needs, particularly as you become proficient in your acquisition career field and start your broadening experience. An assessment instrument, the Acquisition Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (ALEI), may be found at <http://alei.doddacm.com>. If weaknesses in any area are noted, seek out leadership development

courses or assignments that will strengthen the areas concerned. Team effort and strong leadership qualities are essential for a successful PM/AC tour.

12. Be aware that various boards and competitive development programs will require submission of a Senior Rater Potential Evaluation (SRPE) for GS-13, -14 and -15 applicants.

The SRPE is your Senior Rater's assessment of your leadership potential and potential for advancement to higher levels of responsibility. Along with the ALEI assessment, the ratings will assist you with identifying your development needs. The SRPE is an important document that must be included in your application package for PM/AC boards and other competitive opportunities.

13. Meet all the requirements for AAC membership.

The AAC is a subset of the AL&T Workforce and membership is governed by the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). *Applicants for PM/AC positions must either be AAC members or qualify for membership.* There are a number of paths to AAC membership.

- Meet all the qualifications for AAC membership and be selected for a Critical Acquisition Position (CAP) (GS-14 or personnel demonstration project broadband equivalent):

Experience:	4 years of acquisition experience
Training:	Level II certification or the mandatory training (Level III is mandatory within 18 months of occupying the position)
Education:	Baccalaureate degree 24 semester hours in business or 24 semester hours in your ACF and 12 semester hours in business

- Apply for membership at the GS-13 level with Corps Eligible (CE) status and Level III certification in an ACF. (While regulation requires only Level II certification/training for AAC membership, the Army requires that GS-13s have Level III certification prior to accession into the AAC. Corps Eligible (CE) status indicates that an individual has met the experience, training, and education requirements for AAC membership and only lacks the grade. This ensures a fully qualified cadre of applicants for CAP vacancies.)
- Compete for and complete the Competitive Development Group (CDG) Program. Individuals become members of the AAC upon completion of the program if they occupy at least a GS-13 position.
- Be accessed into the AAC of another DOD component. Regulation requires reciprocity across DOD.

14. Apply for the CDG Program.

The program will help prepare you for a PM/AC assignment and will make you more competitive

before boards. Level III certified AL&T Workforce members with AAC or CE status who are GS-12 or -13/equivalent personnel demonstration project broadband may apply for the CDG Program. It is a 3-year developmental training program that offers high-potential, board-selected personnel expanded training, leadership and other career development opportunities. The CDG program will provide aspiring PMs/ACs an excellent opportunity to obtain leadership and cross-functional training.

15. Consider applying for a position as a Deputy Project or Product Manager (DPM).

An assignment as a DPM will provide excellent experience in preparing you for a PM/AC position and will be an advantage when competing on boards.

16. Be aware of the various school and command boards.

Monitor the HRC Web pages for details on school and command boards, <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/opfam51/ambmain.htm>. The AETE Catalog on the ASC home page provides education, training, and experience opportunities funded by the ASC.

17. Apply to the Acquisition Product Manager and Acquisition Command Board (LTC/GS-14 or equivalent personnel demonstration project broadband).

Best-qualified boards are held annually and are announced on the HRC home page. The HRC home page contains information on qualifications and the requirements to apply. *Start the application process in time to ensure you have the best application package possible. If available, ask a former board member or a former PM/AC to review your application for quality.*

18. Apply for a Senior Service College Program Board (to coincide with completion of your product manager assignment).

The Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) presents the Senior Acquisition Management Course (ACQ 401). This is the preeminent course for members of the Acquisition Corps and, as such, is an important step in advancing your career. The University of Texas presents its equivalent, the Senior Service College Fellowship. The ICAF board is convened by the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs). Information on this board is online at <http://www.cpol.army.mil>. The University of Texas Senior Service College Fellowship is boarded by HRC as an AETE program opportunity. Information on this board may be found at <http://asc.army.mil>. See the "Senior Service College" in the AETE Catalog section. SSC will make you more competitive for PM/AC positions.

19. Apply for the Acquisition Command and Project Manager Board (COL/GS-15 or equivalent broadband).

As with the product manager application, start the application process in time to ensure you have the best application package possible. If available, ask a former board member or a former PM/AC to review your application for quality.

20. Be proactive in seeking a challenging follow-on position to your PM/AC assignment.

Approximately 1 year out from completion of your PM/AC tour, contact your ACM at AMB for

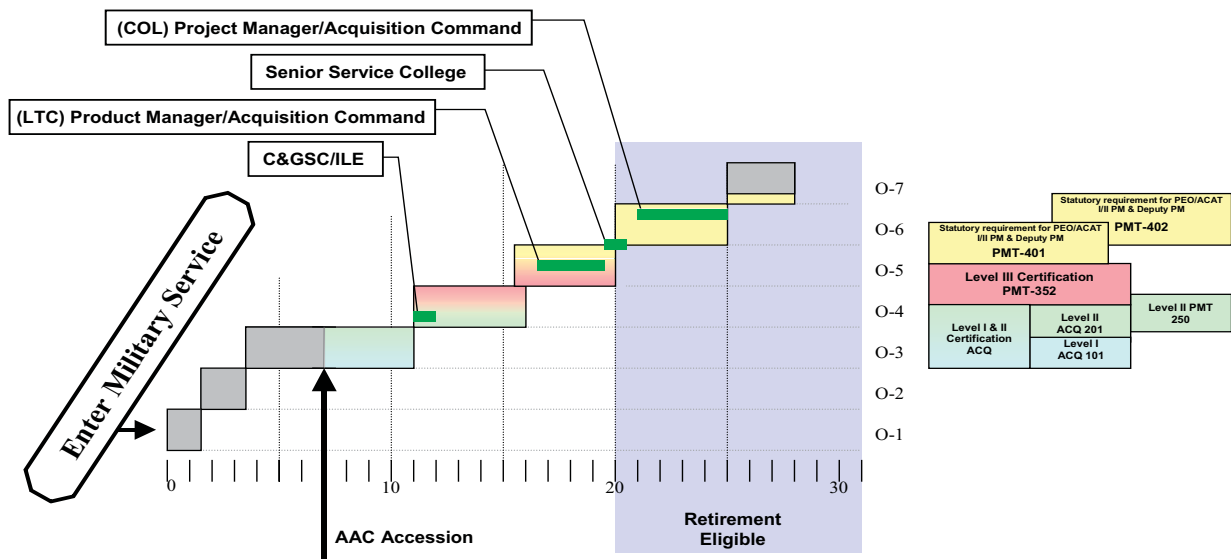
assistance. Seek out positions on your own that will allow you to optimize the knowledge and experience gained from the PM/AC assignment. (See more details on post utilization assignments in Section VII of this document.)

21. Participate in Continuous Learning (CL) activities throughout your career.

Throughout your career you should participate in CL activities. The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD(AT&L)) Policy on CL for the Acquisition Workforce requires that you complete a minimum of 40 CL points a year or a total of 80 over a 2-year period. Attainment of CL points is not limited to the traditional classroom setting but may be earned in numerous ways. Practically any training — DAU, leadership courses, university hours, rotational assignments — may be counted toward achievement of your CL points. Work with your supervisor to ensure attainment of CL points is considered when developing your IDP and ensure points earned are captured on your IDP, which is used to document continuous learning.

C. Military Product/Project Manager and Acquisition Commander Model

AAC Military Career Model



Stair step "up or out" career path with single entry point
Shaded bars indicate typical career path (colors match acquisition training requirements)
Time in grade for individual careers may vary slightly

D. Steps to planning your military acquisition career with the goal of becoming a PM/AC.

The following will provide you with general information, points of contact, policies, procedures and terminology that are important to your acquisition career development. While many of the steps will overlap, they are generally sequentially ordered.

1. Contact your Assignment Officer in the Acquisition Management Branch (AMB).

Upon accession into the AAC, your first step should be to contact your Assignment Officer at AMB, who will be able to advise and assist you in planning your career development. Army National Guard (ARNG) ACMs are located at the ARNG Readiness Center, Falls Church, VA, and provide assistance to ARNG Title 32 Technician personnel. U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) ACMs are located at the USAR Acquisition Management Branch, HRC, St. Louis, MO. The list of ACMs and contact information may be found at <http://asc.army.mil>.

2. Determine career objectives and select primary and secondary Areas of Concentration (AOC).

The AL&T Workforce is made up of officers and civilians who perform work throughout the life cycle of the system; i.e., "cradle to grave." There are five military AOCs in the AL&T Workforce, as follows:

- 51A: Systems Development (Program Management)
- 51C: Contracting and Industrial Management (Contracting)
- 51R: Systems Automation Engineering and Acquisition (Communication-Computer Systems)
- 51S: Research and Engineering (Systems Planning, RD&E)
- 51T: Test & Evaluation

A more detailed description of these career fields is in DA Pam 600-3, Chapter 4, http://books.usapa.belvoir.army.mil/cgi-bin/bookmgr/BOOKS/P600_3/47.0.

3. Evaluate Advance Civil Schooling (ACS) opportunities.

There are many opportunities for the Acquisition Corps officer to attend ACS. However, career timelines and type of degree sought will influence which program fits your career. Contact your Assignment Officer for a detailed discussion of the opportunities for your specific goals. The AMB home page outlines the programs that are available.

4. Refer to the Army Acquisition Corps Military Career Model.

This model provides a framework with which to conduct career planning.

5. Prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

The IDP is a 5-year plan that outlines your education, training and experience goals. Define your career goals and objectives in concrete terms; i.e., where are you in your career and where do you want to be in the short and long term. Using guidance provided by your Assignment Officer, work with your supervisor and agree on a plan that is consistent with your goals. Document the desired

education, training or experience on your IDP. For detailed information on completing the IDP, go to <https://rda.rdaisa.army.mil/cappmis/idp/idpprod/login.cfm>.

6. Become certified in your primary Area of Concentration.

The goal for proficiency in your AOC is attainment of Level III certification. The certification requirements, by acquisition career field, may also be found in the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Catalog, <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dau>. If you have trouble understanding any of the requirements, you may contact your Assignment Officer for clarification. There are a number of ways to obtain training required for certification, as follows:

- Attend DAU resident/on-site courses.
- Take DAU Distance Learning (Web-based) courses.
- Obtain credit for equivalent courses.
- Obtain credit through the Fulfillment Program. Go to <http://asc.army.mil> for DOD Fulfillment policy and the Army Implementing Instructions for Fulfillment. (Courses offered through distance learning may not be fulfilled.)

For DAU course schedules, go to <https://atrrs.army.mil/channels/aitas>.

7. Commence Career Broadening Activities.

Once you have become proficient in your primary career field, you should commence career-broadening activities.

- If PM/AC is not the primary career field, pursue an assignment in a PMO and become Level III certified in PM/AC.
- Pursue functional assignments in your secondary career field.
- Become certified at least at Level II in one or more other career fields.
- Apply for learning opportunities offered in the AETE Catalog.
- Apply for a master's degree through the ACS program.

8. Meet Corps membership requirements and apply for membership.

The AAC is a subset of the Army Acquisition Workforce; applicants for AAC membership must meet specified statutory and regulatory requirements and apply for membership. The requirements are found on the ASC's home page, <http://asc.army.mil>. When you believe you have met the requirements, contact your Assignment Officer in the AMB for instructions for applying for membership. ARNG and USAR personnel should contact their Acquisition Career Managers. Contact information is on the ASC home page.

9. Participate in CL activities.

Throughout your career, you should participate in continuous learning activities. The USD(AT&L) Policy on CL for the Acquisition Workforce requires that you earn 40 CL points a year or 80 CL points within a 2-year period. Attainment of CL points is not limited to the traditional classroom setting but may be earned in numerous ways. Work with your supervisor to ensure attainment of CL points is considered when developing your IDP and ensure points earned are captured on it. The CL Policy and Army Implementing Instructions may be found at <http://asc.army.mil>.

10. Be aware of the various promotion, school and command boards.

Monitor HRC online for updated career information and timelines. Go to the following link for details on promotion, school, and command boards
<https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/opfam51/ambmain.htm>.

11. Complete Command and General Staff College (CGSC).

AAC officers must attain Military Education Level 4 certification either through resident or nonresident completion of CGSC prior to primary zone consideration for selection to LTC. AAC officers compete for selection to attend resident CGSC just like the officers in all other OPMS III career fields.

12. Compete for Product Manager and Acquisition Command Boards (LTC).

Boards are held annually and are announced on the HRC home page. Information on available positions, eligibility, and application requirements may be found at
<https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/opfam51/ambmain.htm>.

13. Compete for Senior Service College (LTC/COL).

Best Qualified Boards are held annually. Information on available programs, eligibility, and application requirements may be found at
<https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/opfam51/ambmain.htm>.

14. Compete for the Project Manager and Acquisition Command Board (COL).

Best Qualified Boards are held annually and are advertised on the HRC home page. Information on available positions, eligibility, and application requirements may be found at
<https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/opfam51/ambmain.htm>.